

EPIS TLE
FOR THE
Remnant of Friends,
AND
Chosen of God,
WHOM
He hath yet preserved to bear their Testi-
mony in and about the City
O F
L O N D O N;

To WHOM,

This is a Testimony of the dear Love, and
tender care which flowes forth, and is ex-
tended towards them, and all tender hearts who
are concerned in the like Sufferings, Tempta-
tions, and Tryals.

From their faithful Friend and Servant in the
Lord, G. WHITHREAD.

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*This is an Epistle for the remnant of Friends, and
Chosen of God, whom he hath yet preserved
to bear their Testimony in and about the City
of London, &c.*

O My dearly Beloved Friends, Brethren and Sisters, among whom my Soul hath travelled and suffered for the Afflicted's sake, and whose burthen and tryals are still with me in Spirit, as also the Love, Tenderness, care, and freeness of Spirit that has appeared among you towards the afflicted and harmless sufferers, who have been led and driven as sheep to the slaughter for the witness of Jesus, and of a good Conscience. Oh, dear hearts feel my life and tender bowels towards you all in the spirit and unity of true love and faith of the Elect seed, wherein life and dominion is felt, by all that wait patiently upon the Lord in true subjection to his eternal Power and Council in all the Exercises, tryals and hardships that the Righteous Seed is beset withal, that being thorowly tried it may come forth as Gold thorowly refined; and the Righteous who are of this Seed may through all these things go on in their way, and the Innocent and clean in heart may grow stronger and stronger in the Lord, that Truth and Righteousness may for ever shine forth both among you and all his Elect to the praise of his Name, who both beholds, feels, and bears the sufferings of his People, in his long suffering and patience, wherein the spirits of his Chosen ones are ex-
ciled,

cised, and by which they shall overcome, and be more then Conquerours, where neither calamities, distresses, life nor death shall ever be able to separate from that love, virtue, life and glory revealed and made manifest in the faithful.

And my dear hearts, the glory and weight of Gods Righteous Testimony of life and Salvation, being in his light truly and evidently manifested in and among you; you have great cause for ever to prize his love and glorifie his Name, and stick close to him therein, what ever perils, trials, oppositions, sufferings, or temptations you meet withal, and to be of a constant spirit, and upright mind in the unchangable truth to the Lord God of life, in whom your preservation and safety stands, knowing that no weight of affliction or suffering is comparable to the weight of Eternal life and Salvation, which you are called unto, through the Glorious appearance of God's power and Gospel of peace and Salvation; for the fence and enjoyment thereof doth certainly out-ballance and far exceed all the sufferings and trials of the present time though they are very many and deep.

And so none of you to be discouraged or shaken in mind at things of this nature, nor because of the seeming advantage or occasion that the wicked or rebellious and envious spirits, (or such as are prejudiced) do take against us because of that common Calamity and late Mortality which has befallen many of the Righteous as well as the Unrighteous (as to the outward man) in this time of such a great and universal calamity and sore distrels as has been upon that City; for God's Testimony and glory shines and will shine, and break through all these clouds of afflictions, sufferings, and reproaches which the Habitation of the Righteous hath been and is encompassed with; yea the

the faithfulness, innocency and uprightness of many innocent Lambs in and about that City is never to be forgotten, which so greatly did appear and shine forth in their faithfully standing to their Testimony, and keeping to the Truth in tenderness of Conscience and sincerity towards God, who hath called us to meet together in his fear, and in his everlasting name and power, and out of a real respect to his Glory and righteous cause which is concern'd in the obedience of his people both in that and all other duties or acts of obedience required by him whose obedience and spiritual worship many have not denied nor declined, neither under the trials which have proceeded from men or under those which came from God, but whether they have been liable to fall into the hands of God or men for the proofe of their faith, they have not departed from him, who makes up his Jewels through trials and tribulations in all which his Fatherly care is felt, and his tender mercy and compassion is seen towards his own as to his own peculiar Off-spring and tender babes, sons and faithful servants whom he loves, and therefore chastiseth and tryeth not in anger and fury, but in love, fatherly care and pity, so that whose eyes are open in the true light, and in a right mind and spirit have thoroughly weighed the state of the suffering seed amongst us which is in the faith of *Abraham* brought forth in the Immortal power of an endless life, considering the faithfulness and godly sincerity of a Remnant whose life hath testified for God herein, both in doing good and suffering for well doing, such who have thus weighed this suffering state do plainly see that neither Satan nor his Instruments have any real advantage against any of the Remnant of this Seed, through any of these trials or sufferings either from the hands of God or men since that many have kept their Integrity

ergrity to the last, and have imbraced their trials and afflictions in Gods tender love ; and have had such unity therewith that they have been far from either blaspheming or cursing God as the wicked many times have done , and will do when Plagues, woes, torments, and pains seize upon them, but neither Satan nor his Instruments have their evil designs or ends answered, or fulfilled herein against the Righteous as the Devil would have had against Job under his affliction when he sought to make him curse God to his face, so that the Truth of our God and innocence of his people (who know the Redemption of the Soul which is precious) doth and shall come over both Men and Devils, in as much as the Truth is over the Devil himself, (who hath the power of death and darkness) even to the confounding and stoping their mouths that they all who are acted by the power and spirit of enmity and darkness may be convicted, confounded, and left without excuse before the Lord God, who will be known to be clear when he judges.

Yea blessed for ever be the name of our God who hath given us strength and courage to stand in an evil day over Hell and Death, and the Devil with all his fiery darts and fierce assaults against the Righteous, and that the Lord hath yet spared, and will spare a Remnant to bear his mark and name upon Earth, and to hold forth a living Testimony for his glory and praise amongst the sons of Men, for which many have not loved their lives unto death, but have offered up their lives as divers manifestly did in that City the last Summer when such a sore Visitation and Calamity was upon that place, wherein divers offered up life and all for the truth, and their afflicted Brethren and Sisters, for whose sakes my soul has often been greatly bowed down and afflicted, and my bowels have yearned for them, and my

my Inwards were so moved with compassion and broken-
ness of spirit that neither life it self nor any outward privi-
lege did seem too dear to me to resign or offer up for their
sakes.

And though when the Sicknes was so hot in that City
and Prisons, some of the Persecutors at that time appeared
cruel, wicked and abominable against the Innocent to de-
stroy them in these Pestilential places of Confinement,
where both there, and also on Shipboard (wherein so many
were confined for Banishment) many innocent Lambs laid
down their lives for the witness of a good Conscience: And
though the wicked may for a time in their wickednes and
mischievous minds be lifted up against us to insult over us
because of these our deep trials, and the death of so many
innocent persons either in the Prisons, on Shipboard, or
out of Prisons; yet their being so elevated and hardened
against us (who are the People of the Lord) does but the
more make for, and further their own destruction, ruine
and misery as often I have said and been sensible, and their
Plague torment, and calamity (which slumbers not) is
greater and more sad then many's that have died under
that common Calamity of the Pestilence by which many
have been removed both of good and bad, which thing
those that are yet alive and remain in their sins without
taking warning thereby, it will prove the greatest Plague
and Judgment against such who are the least considerate &
sensible of the hand of the Lord in it, or of their states and
conditions; for as to this particular calamity or fickness;
'tis (in it self) not the worst of Judgments which God
hath in store for a sinful, provoking, rebellious people or
Nation, and Gods controversie is not yet ended in this
Nation, nor the viols of his displeasure emptied upon
his enemies and persecutors of his Seed. And oh! to
consider

consider what a sore & heavy Judgment is it, & what misery does it presage to many in this Nation that so many innocent or Righteous persons in it should be taken away as those whom the world are not worthy of, but such are taken away from the evil to come, both from future calamities, and set in safety for ever from them that have puffed at them, and made a prey upon them in their life time.

And as for us that yet remain, who fear the Lord, and stick close to him always, eyeing and setting him before us in the greatest of our perils and sufferings, we know his goodness endures for ever, though the mighty and exalted of the Earth boast and insult (for a time) over us, and the more the suffering is, the greater is the consolation and glory to them that continue faithful to the end.

And what ever conclusions are brought forth against us either by wicked men, or any who in prejudice turn against us and take occasion from this Mortality (which has come upon so many Friends in the time of this great Calamity) as if it were in Gods wrath, indignation or fury against the body of Friends, or any of us who are come to the Communion of the body of Christ (which we are Members of) or if any that profess the name of the Lord be so clouded, byassed and prejudiced in their minds as to conclude this a fulfilling of some such Prophecies of wrath and indignation against Friends; such spirits and evil tidings are plainly seen, and they to be presumptuous and no Prophets sent of the Lord, and therefore cannot make us afraid, who confide in the name of our God, and in that living faith wherein our unity and victory stands, our innocent life stands over them in true Judgment against all that which among some has crept in at unawares to create devotions & enmity against the faithful servants or people of God where't is received in any unstable or brittle spirits;

And

And therefore my soul saith, the Lord rebuke thee oh Satan! who enviest the heritage of God, why doest thou subtilly present thy self amongst the sons of God to trouble the innocent? endeavouring with thy fiery darts and temptations of this nature to turn them against their Maker? and why doest thou subtilly make use of Instruments in this thy wicked work to effect thy treacherous designs? The Lord will rebuke thee by his mighty power; for we are sure that where Gods faithful Witness in the Conscience is owned which ought to be judge in the case, and must decide the Controversie: We know that does bear witness with us and for us, and to the justification of all the Faithful amongst us who are really *of Us*, and belong to the seed of Election; and therefore, will not go out from us, who abide in the truth of God which changes not, being of the seed of *Jacob*, and off-spring of *Israel* after the Spirit (which is beyond revolting *Israel* after the flesh) for herein are we heirs of promise, and then who shall condemn, conclude, or prophesie wrath where God justifies, and not bring condemnation upon themselves? for that Gods love was felt by many under that trial and Visitation which many died in, about that City, and many were sensible of Gods love and favour till the very last.

And the life, peace, satisfaction and comfort that many innocent Friends felt, and that some express and signified on their Deathbeds; I am a living Witness of, for them: Having at some times [as the Lord hath drawn me in his Love] been present with many of them when they were very low in the outward Man, and with divers when upon their Deathbeds both in that destructive place of Newgate, and some other places; Yea, when sorrow and sadness has seized upon my spirit, and my heart and soul has been

pierc'd and wounded when I have seen the sad sufferings of so many harmless Lambes when they were on their sick beds in these noysome holes and Prisons : Yet at the same time having had a deep lense and knowledg of the Lords love and care to them in that condition, and having truly felt his life and power stirring amongst them : This, on the other hand has refresh'd and revived my spirit, knowing that Christ their Salvation and Redemption was manifest to and in them, though in that suffering state, as they have followed and obeyed him through sufferings and tribulations, and so with such to live was Christ in that state, and to die was gain ; it being through death that the Lord had appointed the final deliverance of many from the cruelties and rod of their Oppressors, and so from the miseries and evils to come.

And also the faithfulness, uprightness, and innocency of divers of those that were taken away, and their constancy of Spirit to the Lord, and his living truth, and their unfeigned love to the Brethren, (by the which, 'twas evident they had passed from death to life) and what a living and faithful Testimony they bear for the Lord in their life time, being well known and manifest amongst us, their Memorial is truly precious to us, and never to be forgotten ; and we are satisfied that they were found worthy for the Lord, and the World was not worthy of them.

And besides, some whom God hath restored and raised up again, who yet remain alive with us, who were under the same trial and sickness, can testify to Gods tender love to them ; and how freely they were therein by faith given up to the Lord under it in his love and favour (which they partake of) either to die or live as he should be pleased to dispose of them, knowing that some that were very dear to the Lord, even some of his choyse Jewels and peculiar treasure were removed by it.

So that I must say what I have seen and felt, that as to the state of faithful Friends in this case; some by faith according to the will of God were given up and desirous rather to die then live, and therein freely imbraced the outward affliction or calamity which was but for a moment in comparison; knowing that to die would be a great advantage and gain to them, and that thereby they should be freed from future sufferings, burthens, calamities and evils; and their Spirits should acquiesce and rest in everlasting peace, joy and triumph. And others by faith were simply and singly given up in the will of God to die, if he should so dispose of them, not in themselves expecting life or recovery, and yet in so being given up have come to be restored again to continue longer, bearing their Testimony amongst us, having known and felt that in the patience to resign to the will of God in self-denial, abasement and humility in their affliction and trial, was most consistant with their peace. And again, some others of us by faith according to the will of God, have been kept over the distemper and hitherto preserved alive; not for any respect that we may assume to our selves in the matter, nor for any reason (as I know) that can be shewn for us more then for some innocent persons that were taken away, but that the Lord had a respect to his own glory and further service for himself which he had for us to do and be employed in, and that he will preserve a Remnant as he hath determined to bear his Name and hold forth his Testimony amongst men in their innocent lives and holy Conversations; so as the glory and praise we give to the Lord, desiring all of us may faithfully serve him in Godly fear and true humility the days we have to sojourn here, that we all may ever be in his praise, in whose hand we are whether we live or die; for he makes all things to work together for good to them that

that love him, who are not offended in him in any of their tribulations, or temptations, when the hour of temptation is upon all flesh to try them that dwell upon the face of the earth ; he that has committed unto us the word of his patience who is *Israel's* Keeper is our preserver, support and refuge thorough all these things, and he has made us co-workers together in one and the same spirit of faith and life, wherein he is obeyed and submitted to by his faithful people and servants in their several states, trials and exercises, and among whom the various effects and fruits of the same faith are seen and brought forth according to his will, who gives life and preservation.

And now moreover if such as take advantage against us on this occasion aforesaid, (whether they be open or secret smiters or enemies) did either rightly or seriously come to weigh their conditions, and let Gods witness judge in the case, they have no cause to boast, glory or insult over us or against us, for that they are not their own Keepers, nor is their life continued by their own power , and how soon their time may be expired, and their judgment overtake them they know not, nor how soon their days may be cut asunder ; to be sure their condemnation slumbers not, who in the pride of their hearts and presumption of their spirits turn against the suffering seed of God under what profession and pretence soever, though under pretence of the name of the Lord or profession of the truth is self, and knowing also that many that were of their own spirit and principle have also been taken away under the same calamity, (for it has extended to all sorts both holy and prophanes) they have cause to dread and fear before the Lord, and not to be high minded nor presumptuous, for the mouth of the boaster and exalted must be stopp'd, and all flesh and carnal reason is to be silent in this matter, for Gods power is over it all, and

and over that which has threatened or brought evil tidings against his *Israe*l ; for we know the same spirit that turns against us, and watches for occasions, and prophesies out destruction, would have it come to pass, so to be reckoned a true Prophet , and that is the murtherer that kills the poor, the same that's in our open enemies, and the same that was in *Cain* against his Brother , and he that is in this spirit or principle of enmity or prejudice, hath no eternal life abiding in him. O let this thing be publisht in the ears of Gods people, and let Friends feel my innocent intention and end herein; having writ the more of this nature for prevention of the enemy's subtlety and temptations of this kind, that the tender and weak may not be ensnared thereby ; I knowing and having really seen how Satan besets such with temptations upon these deep trials, to undermine their hope and to beget unbelief and despair in the minds to turn them from truth, and how he makes use of his Instruments in the same way to effect his evil end against us, but the Lord will rebuke him and bruise him under the feet of his own anointed seed and faithful people.

And now a common calamity or distemper as this which has brought such a great Mortality (as it hath been appointed and permitted of the Lord) has extended and operated according to the spreading and contagious nature and property of it, to the bodies of both old and young, good and bad, no except and innocent, yea to many that know not their right hand from the left ; but the iniquities and abominations of the wicked was the cause of Gods anger and displeasure herein, and the Original cause of this Calamity, the Creation being opprest under their wickedness, and the Earth defiled under the Inhabitants, which causeth the Heavens to frown upon the World, and the curse to go forth, and Blessings to be withheld from them, and the taking

taking away of good and merciful men, and many innocent persons though it be in love to themselves, yet it is in judgment against the other who have brought innocent blood upon their own heads by their cruelties and persecution, and whose hearts are hardened and become cruel and im- placable against Truth and Righteousness, and all them that walk thee in, whose souls have been daily vexed and oppressed through the ungodly, and unchristian coversation of the wicked.

And God who spared not his own Son, but delivered him to suffer and to be numbered among Transgressors both in life and death, and his soul to be an Offering for the Offences of many ; he also hath given many of his dear Children not only to believe, but also to suffer with his own Son who hath borne our griefs and sorrows, and with him he has suffered them to be reckoned and numbered among Transgressors both in their life and death, that his Followers might bear his reproaches and partake of his sufferings, who made his Grave with the wicked and with the rich in his deaths, and was esteemed as smitten or plagued of God, though as to their own conditions it is and will be well with the Righteous for ever, having obtained witness thereof, and for their justification from the Lord God, by whose Righteous Witness it's known and manifest in secret in Mens Consciences, where he visits in wrath, or distributes sorrows in his anger, and where he visits, tries, or chastises in love, favour, and tender mercy ; and this Witness discovers where the guilt of sin and disobedience is, where deceit, treachery, and revolting from truth is, which occasions terrors and fear of Death, and which incur the anger and wrath of God upon the guilty therein, and also brings sufferings upon the tender & innocent, who knowing the guilt taken away and removed, every affliction

affliction and trial that such meet withal is sanctified to them through the tender love and favour of God wherewith their cup is mixed, which their implacable enemies and persecutors shall drink the dregs of without mixture; now the difference herein of the two states and conditions of men is felt and discerned in the Invisible, by that which judgeth not by the sight of the eye or hearing of the ear, nor barely from the outward appearance of common afflictions (which sometimes come alike upon all) but in Righteousness and Truth that judgeth, and as it hath been said (of old) concerning the Righteous whose souls are in the hand of God, that in the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be unto destruction, but they are in peace; for though they be punished in the sight of Men, yet is their hope full of Immortality, and having been a little chastized, they shall be greatly rewarded, for God proved them Wisd. 3. and found them worthy for himself, as Gold in the Furnace hath he tryed them, and received them as a Burnt-offering, &c. Yea such are they who shall judge the Nations and have dominion over the people, whose Lord (that takes care for his Elect) shall reign for ever.

Now my dear Friends and tender hearts commit your way to the Lord, and cast your burthen upon him, and he will bear you up, and sustain you by his own right hand of power; and live in the Immortal Seed and Spiritual Communion where life and peace is daily received, and your mutual Refreshment and Consolation stands, and wherein the Spirits of just Men are seen and felt, and the life of Gods faithful Servants and Martyrs, and such as have finished their Testimony with joy and peace, is enjoyed even in this Spiritual Communion, which reaches beyond all VISIBLES, and is above all mortal and fading Objects or things.

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kins. Scrin the dear and tender Love of God, which
dwelleth and liveth in my heart towards you, and all the faith-
ful every where, I commit you to him, in whom our help
and deliverance is, and in the Kingdom of Christ's
Patience, am

*Your Dear and Faithful Friend and
Brother, G. W.*

Let This be read distinctly in the Life
and Authority of ~~God~~ (from whence it
came) among Friends, in, and about the
City of London, and elsewhere, as any
Friends are moved in the same Life.

THE END.

